The School of Patience.

OR,

The Benefit of Affliction to the People of God.

Set forth in a short Discourse of two great Examples of Patience: the one from the Example of *Job* the other from the great Exemplar, *Christ Jesus.*

London, Printed for *Tho. Passenger* at the Three Bibles on *London-Bridge*. 1667.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The School of Patience.

James the 5 *Chap.* 11 *Verse.*

Behold we count them happy which endure, ye have heard of the patience of *Job*, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

BEloved Christians, in the Book of Job we may read that memorable History touching his heavy Visitation, impregnable Patience, and blessed Issue at last: Job so lived in the world, that he became acceptable to God, and an Example or Pattern of Vertue to men. We read in the beginning of his book of his prosperous and happy condition, both in his children, and in his substance, and we soon after, read of his manifold sufferings, which through the instigation of Satan, and the holy permission and dispensation of God, fell upon his goods, and children, and person, even to the being mocked and scored by his own wife: Here his patience did most wonderfully bear up, like a Palm-tree, against the weight of all oppressures. Now beloved Christians, the Lord

suffers his children yea the best of his Saints, to be many times afflicted by his and their enemies, because, as I shall shew you,

1. It makes for the glory of his Power.

2. It makes for the glory of his Wisdom.

Moses having declared in what manner the Lord permitted Pharaoh to oppress the children of Israel more and more, still hardening of his heart, shews the reason of it in these words, that I may multiply my miracles & wonders in the land of Egypt, that I may lay my hand upon Pharaoh, and bring out mine armies, even my people, by great judgments, that my power may be known, & that I may declare my Name throughout all the world, Exod. 7. 34. and 9. 16.

Gods Power is best made known in our weakness. 2 Cor. 12. 9. and our deliverance is so much the more wondred at, by how much the less expected. Impossibilities are the best advancers of Gods glory: As God afflicts his children for the glory of his power, so also it makes for the glory of his wisdom. Josephs brethren sold him into Egypt, to prevent him that he might not reign over them, but God made it the only means of his reigning over them, Gen. 37. 20. 36. The chief Priests and Pharisees would put Christ to death, lest all men should believe in him, Joh. 11. 47, 48. 53 when thereby chiefly all came to believe in

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3. God many times afflicts his Children, that their graces may the more shine through imployment, and that the world may see and take more notice of them: Surely if Gods justice gets so much honor by a Pharaoh, much more doth his Mercy by a Moses! Abrahams faith, Jobs patience, Pauls courage and constancy, if they had not been tried by the fire of affliction, their graces had been hid as a candle under a bushel, which now to the glory of God shines throughout all the world. Who could know the faith, patience, and valour of Gods soldiers, if they alwaies lay in a Garrison, and never came to the Skirmish, whereas they are now examples, & put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet. 2. 15. If Satan had known his afflicting of Job would have so much advanced the glory of God, and manifested Jobs admirable patience to all Ages, made such a glorious president for imitation to others, occasioned so much shame to himself, I doubt not but Job should have continued prosperous and quiet; for who will

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ſet upon his Adverſary, when he knows he ſhall be ſhamefully beaten?

4 God ſuffers his Children many times to be afflicted and perſecuted by ungodly men, that ſo they may be brought to repentance, and to work in them amendment of life: thoſe bitter ſufferings of Jobin his latter end made him to poſſeſſe the iniquities of his youth: if that needle of affliction be drawn thorow us by reaſon of wicked mens malice, it is but to convey it with the thread of amendment. Of admirable uſe is affliction to the godly, where the Lord is pleaſed to give patience to indure to the end! Oh that every poor ſoul could, as holy David, ſay, It was good for me that I was afflicted: for very often afflictions do ſtir us up to holy Duties. In their affliction, ſaith Hoſea, they will ſeek thee diligently, Hoſ. 5. 15. It makes a ſoul earneſt in prayer, and prayer we know is the wing of the Soul wherewith it flies to Heaven. Now beloved friends, you ſee that afflictions are oftentimes for the benefit of Gods Children, & God doth afflict them in this life, that they may ſeek after with much earneſtneſs a better; for while we are in this world, we muſt not expect any true felicity, or any ſpiritual joy that can laſt long becauſe this world is ful of inconſtancy, to day we may be in the higheſt pitch of proſperity, and to morrow in the lowſt pit of adverſi-

verſity, as we have ſhewn you in that admirable Pattern of Patience, holy Job. Now there might be many reaſons given why the Godly ought to be patient in ſuffering of wrongs, but I ſhal name but a few to you, to give you ſome ſatisfaction in this point.

1. They bear the ſlander and reproach of wicked men patiently, becauſe they are falſe, and ſo do not belong to them. Diogenes was wont to ſay when the people mockt him, they deride me, yet I am not derided; I am not the man they take me for. If a rich man be called poor, or a ſound Chriſtian an hypocrite, he ſlights it, he laughs at it, becauſe he knoweth the ſame to be falſe, and his accuſer is miſtaken: A good conſcience is not put out of countenance with falſe accuſations of ſanderous tongues. Innocence and Patience are two royal Bucklers ſufficient to abate the repulſe of a ſtrong charge: the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, and the brazen wall of a good Conſcience, fear not the miſchief of the greateſt worldly Cannons.

2. The ſecond Reaſon why the godly bear afflictions patiently is, becauſe it is more laudable to forgive than to revenge. It's our Saviours own command Forgive your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you. In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy, but in paſſing over an injury thou art his ſuperiour.

rior. What is the reason of the mistake of the wicked men of the world, who judge Job a fool, and count David a coward, for their humble patience; This is the difference, theirs was the faith and patience of the saints, here is the infidelity and impatience of sinners, whom the Devil hath bewitched to glory in their shame.

3. Why Gods people endure afflictions with much patience is, because that by suffering, many times they do prevent much suffering. If a wise man contend with a fool, saith Solomon, whether he be angry or laugh, there is no rest, Prov. 29 9. Whereas gentle speech appeaseth wrath, & patience bridleth the secret prating of mockers, and blunteth the point of their reproach. Had not Gideon learned to speak fair, as well as to smite, he had found work enough from the sword of Josephs sons, but his good words are as victorious as his sword, his pacifying of friends better than his execution of enemies.

4. The godly man suffers patiently, because he knoweth that his sins do deserve a farre greater punishment than is laid upon him: A godly man loketh not so much on the punishment as on the cause of it, which is sin: a godly man wil confess himself to be the chiefest of all sinners, & therefore the greatest afflictions or punishment that can come upon any one,

one, it doth not undeservedly come upon him. This we may conclude, that the greatest enemies we have in this world, nay Satan the prince of the air, can do nothing to us without the permission of our Heavenly Father, and therefore let us with patience willingly labor to keep up our selves above water, not trusting in any wise to our own strength, but lay all our confidence upon the shoulders of him that is able; yea and willing to support us, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath promised to lay no more upon his children than he will enable them to bear.

5 Let us bear patiently what the Lord is pleased to lay upon us, because by so doing our sufferings are made sweet, and we shall receive for them many comfortable Blessings. Satan and the world may take many things from us, as they did from Job, both health, wealth, children, friends, & all outward comforts for a season, but they can never take God from us who gives all, and at the same time supplies the want of these with comforts far surpassing and transcending all other comforts: therefore in the midst of misery let us say with Job, Blessed be the name of the Lord. And further for thy encouragement, know that the Lord hath promised to be with a christian in tribulation: this the Scripture holds forth in several examples, which I now forbear to mention.

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6. The godly sincere-hearted Christian doth patiently bear what the Lord layes upon him, because patience brings a reward with it. If you forgive men their trespasses (saith our Savtour) your Heavenly Father wil also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly father forgive you your trespasses, Matth. 6. 14, 15. Again, Blessed is the man (saith St. James) that endureth temptation with patience, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, 1 Jam. 12. We have a notable example in Moses, who was not onely patient in his suffering, but joyful, esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches than the treasure of Egypt, Heb. 11. 26. St. Paul doth witness, that our light affliction which is but for a moment (if it be born with patience) causeth unto us a far more excellent & eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things that are seen, but on the things which are not seen 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. In these words we may observe the infinite difference there is between the work and the wages: light affliction receives a weight of glory. If we suffer with Christ here, we shall reign with him hereafter: a true Christian is assured, that if his life be lost in the service of Christ, yet his labor is not lost. Thus have I in brief given you some few reasons of many which I might give, to shew

shew you that the godly man can, and doth endure through the assistance of God, the Fathers afflictions with patience.

Having thus briefly given you an example out of the Old Testament of the admirable patience of Job in his sufferings, and from thence hinted to you the benefit which every true Christian doth gain by affliction, when the Lord is pleased to give him patience to submit to his will, I shall yet further set forth this glorious Gem in that never to be forgotten Pattern of Patience, the Lord Jesus Christ: but I shall be brief in it, because the Scripture doth sufficiently set forth the truth thereof. Observe the words of St. Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 21. Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. And it is written of him, That when he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatned not, 1 Pet. 2. 23. He was called of his enemies Conjurer, Samaritane, Wine-bibber, was scoft at, and scorned, scourged, crucified, and what not? Yea he suffered in every place and part, he suffered hunger in the desart, he was resisted in the Temple, he was sorrowful in the Garden, he was reproached in the Judgement-hall, and crucified without the City; in every part he suffer'd; his eyes run down with tears, and his temples with blood: his eye-

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received many buffets, they gave him gall & vinegar to drink, they spit in his face, plated his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his side with a spear, his heart was full of sorrow, and his soul with anguish, yea his whole body was crucified upon the Crosse for our sins, and in his sufferings we cannot but take notice of his affections to poor sinners, he suffered willingly and patiently, he descended to take our flesh, that we might ascend to take his Kingdome: he descended to be crucified, that we might ascend to be glorified: he descended into hell, that we might ascend up to heaven. O with what admirable patience did he suffer! He was oppressed and afflicted, yet opened he not his mouth, he was brought as a sheep to the slaughter, yet did he not open his mouth, as we may read, Isa. 22. 53. 7.

Christ was so milde that the malice of his greatest enemies could not provoke him to wrath: yea when one of the disciples, Judas by name, came to betray him, Christ did not at all seem to frown upon him, nor did not check him; but (saith he) What thou dost, do quickly. Christ upon the Crosse gave us a very excellent Lecture of Patience. Oh the admirable meeknes of the Lamb of God when the Jews cry out, Crucify him, his blood be upon us, & upon our Children, he cries out, Father forgive them, they know not what they

do!

dol We have a notable example also in Stephen, who when the Jews were stoning of him to death, kneeled down and cryed with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charg Act. 7.60. He was a true scholar of Christ, for first he pray'd for his enemies, yea for his mortal enemies that stoned him, yea, all the time they did it, he was more sorry for their riot than for his own ruine. I could name many instances in Scripture of the patience of the Saints, which would make the wicked of the world stand and be amazed, but I think these few that I have given, are sufficient for this small Treatise, and I would before we come to a conclusion, desire every Christian to make a good use of these Examples, and take notice of these few things that I shall lay down before you.

1 Take notice, if God send afflictions upon us, they are either for our instruction or reformation to try the truth of our sanctification, or for increase of our patience, though they seem grievous to us, yet they will not hurt us.

2 If the malice of our enemies be great, yet the love of God to us is far greater; yet take notice that God loves his children so, as not to make them wantons.

3 Take notice that the sufferings of Gods children, are the happy fore-runners of a joy-

ful issue, even the happy birth of saving repentance: He was not the best disciple that had the bag. And what was Haman the better for his honor, when the King frowned on him? or the happier for being lift up the ladder, and came down again with a rope?

4. Be not thou inquisitive after the intentions of the Lord, but let it satisfie thee that what is laid upon thee, is laid upon thee by the Lord; though the world hate thee, and dispitefully use thee, yet consider that it hath been the portion of good men, and God suffers the wicked man to afflict the righteous: we have many Scripture examples, but I forbear to mention them, because I must come to a conclusion.

5. Take notice that the malice of our greatest enemys can prove no more hurtful to us, than the devils spight to Job, than Judas his treason against the Lord of Life. This should cause us to cry out, O the deepness of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! Rom. 11.33.

6. And lastly, let this provoke us to love our own souls: Though the malice of the world be never so great, yet let us in truth and sincerity look after the salvation of our never-dying Souls. If we do sincerely seek after Christ, we shal find him to be a Savior: when

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our enemy shall finde him to be a just Reuenger, we shal be loosed from sin when they shal be delivered into chains; therefore let this provoke us to love the Lord, and to endeavor to shew forth his vertues. To conclude then, if we be the seed of the woman, and our enemies the seed of the serpent, let us go before them in goodness as far as the Lord hath preferred us before them in mercy.

There are several grounds of Comfort to support a Christian in his suffering, I shall only hint a few, and so make a conclusion of this short Discourse. The first is this:

1. That God is alwaies present with his children in their afflictions and sufferings, and takes great notice of their sufferings, therefore he doth enable them to bear Cross with patience and comfort. Take comfort in this sweet promise, I wil be with thee in trouble, and deliver thee, Psa. 91.15. And thou shalt not bee tempted above thy strength, 1 Cor. 10.10 Again, Fear not, for when thou passest through the waters, I wil be with thee and through the floods, that they do not overflow thee: when thou walkest thorow the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shal the flame kindle upon thee, Isa 43.1, 2. Lo here are precious Promises for poor afflicted Souls! therefore, O dear Christians, be not afraid what man can do unto you, take exam-

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ple by David, who comforted himself upon this ground, he was refreshed in his soul, as we may read in Psal. 94. 19. Though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: why? for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staffe shall comfort me, Psal. 23. 9.

2. Take comfort in this, that thy afflictions do not come by accident or chance, but by the especial Providence of the Lord: Those who do afflict thee, are but the instruments it is the Lord that gives them power to do it for they cannot go beyond their commission. God doth often suffer it to be done, but as I told you, it is for the good of his children. If then they be but as instruments or tools in the work mans hand, we must look to the Authour, and not to the instrument. Let Joseph be sold into Egypt, he will say to his enemies, Ye sent me not hither, but God; when ye thought evil against me, God disposed it for good, Gen. 45. 5. Or let David be rayled against by any cursed Shimei, he will answer, Let him alone, for he curseth, it may be the Lord hath bid him curse David, who then dare say, wherefore hast thou done so? 2 Sam. 26. 10.

3. Let the consideration of this be a comfort to us, that Christ and all the Saints have been our partners in crosses and afflictions.

Look

Lok upon Abel who was slain by his brother. Lok upon Noah who was calumnied. Lot, had his righteous soul vexed from day to day. Job you have read, was a man full of misery, who had nothing left but his wife, whom the Devil spared on purpose to vex him. It were easie to shew thée a large Catalogue, as Joseph, Jeremy, Daniel, John Baptist, St. Paul, and all the generation of Gods Children and servants. For the Apostle giveth a general Testimony of all the Saints in the Old Testament, that some endured the violence of fire, some were wrackt, others were tryed by mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, some stoned, some sawn asunder, some slain with the sword, some wandred up and down in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented; some forced to wander in wildernesses and mountains, and hide themselves in dens, and caves of the earth, being such as the world were not worthy of, Heb. 11.

So we read in Ecclesiastical history, of many of the Saints that suffered in the new Testament, for professing the Gospel, some were stoned, some crucified, and some beheaded; some thrust thorow with Spears, and some burnt with fire, and the like. And it is well known that our Savior Christs whole life, even from his Cradle to his Grave.

was nothing else but a continual suffering: He that had all possessed nothing, except the punishment that was due to us for our sins.

4. Let this comfort us to bear afflictions patiently, because there is a recompence of reward promised to all that persevere in well doing. Great may be our tryals, but we shal gain salvation by it one day. Blessed are they that mourn, (saith our Saviour) for they shall be comforted, *Matth.* 5. 4. Blessed are they which suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, *Ver.* 10. They that suffer here for well doing, shall be crowned hereafter for well suffering. 'Tis true, if in this life only we had hope in Christ, we were of all men most miserable, as the Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. 15. 19. But let us consider, that as this life is our hell here, so this life is the wicked mans heaven, Joh. 16. 20. As the next life shall be their hell, and our heaven. Consider also, that there is not only a reward promised to those which suffer in Christs Cause, but the reward shall be answerable to their sufferings, for according to the measure of an affliction, God weighs unto us of his graces.

Beloved Christians, to conclude, the whole Discourse, let me perswade you to be comforted, though you live in the midst of tryals. Consider you have great cause to rejoyce and

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be glad that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for Christs sake, Acts 5. 41. It is not for nothing that Peter and John when they were beaten and imprisoned, departed from the Council rejoycing that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ's Name, for they counted the Crosse of Christ a great glory to them. Therefore in a word, let me perswade you to beg of the Lord in all thy tryals, that he would be pleased to give thee patience under all crosses or afflictions that he shall be pleased to lay upon thee, and this will be thy greatest privilege, which thou canst expect in this world.

FINIS.

A short Prayer to intreat the Lord, that he would be pleased to give us Patience under any Afflictions.

O Eternal, Ever-living, and Ever-loving Lord God, thou art great and powerful, ful of Majesty, and infinite purity; thou fillest Heaven and Earth with thy Presence, and art in every place to hear the Prayers and Peti-

tions of thy poor people, that do truely believe in thee: but O Lord, our lives have been so sinful, and our actions so vile; that how can we expect Mercy from thee who art so righteous a God? O Lord we must not come before thee in our own strength, but in the Name of thy Son Christ Jesus, humbly suing for thy grace, that we may repent & believe in thee, for thy Promise sake, for thy Sons sake, send down thy holy spirit into our souls subdue our corruptions, change our hearts, and purifie our natures: Give unto us we beseech thee a true, lively & justifying faith, whereby we may lay hold upon all thy precious promises which thou hast made unto us in thy beloved Son Christ Jesus. Preserve and keep us O Lord from the temptations of Satan, the world and our wicked hearts, and wee intreat thee O Lord, endue us with wisdome and holiness; and let thy spirit guide and direct us in all estates and conditions: Lord if thou art pleased to bring us under trials and affliction, give us Patience O Lord, and bear up our souls in the midst of sorrows. We know, O Lord, it was the portion of thy dear Son, when hee took our nature upon him, to be persecuted and reviled by wicked and ungodly men, yet Lord with what admirable Patience did he indure the reproaches of wicked men! and

it hath been the portion of al thy dear Children to meet with perſecutions, yet O Lord thou haſt ſuſtained them, thou haſt upheld them with the right hand of thy power; O Lord we live at this day in a ſinful age, and we do not know how ſoon we may fall into the hands of unreaſonable men, how ſoon we may be brought into bondage for owning thee & thy Chriſt, Lord we beſeech thee forſake us not in a time of need, thou hitherto haſt been graciouſly pleaſed to comfort us with thy everlaſting mercies Lord, continue thy mercies to us, if it bee thy bleſſed will; however O Lord, give us the patience of the Saints, let not our hearts be troubled, but let us believe in thee, and then come what wil, or can come: though our bodys indure a little trouble, our ſouls ſhall enjoy everlaſting happineſs with thee for ever; with us O Lord remember thine all the world over, O Lord convert the Jews, bring in the fulneſs of the Gentiles; O Lord bring down Antichriſt that man of ſin, that exalts himſelf as high as the Heavens, Lord bring him down to hell, and O Lord we beſeech thee look upon this ſinful Kingdom whereof we are members, Lord let not profaneneſs over-run the nation, but let thy truth and goſpel flouriſh. To this end O Lord, pour down the choiceſt of thy bleſſings upon the head and heart of thy Servant,

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and our Soveraign *Charles* our King and Governour, endue his royal heart with wisdom and understanding, let him be a defender of those which do well, let him bee a terror to evil doers. Bless him in his Royal consort, and in the rest of all his Relations, Lord bless all thy faithful Ministers of the Gospel, bring in laborers, and put out loyterers out of thy vineyard, give thy blessing O Lord to us, and to all ours. Preserve & keep us all our life, O Lord, fit us for our latter end, that when we come to die, we may have nothing to do but to render up our souls to thee, who art our Redeemer: these mercies, and all others which thou knowest needful for us, we beg upon the account of thy Son, and our Saviour Christ Jesus, to whom be given as is most due, all honor, glory, and praise, the remaining part of our lives, and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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